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REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 12-14, and 17 are amended to more clearly define the invention. Claims 1 and 14 are independent.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicants also note that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Entry of this §1.116 Amendment is proper. Since the Amendments above narrow the issues for appeal and since such features and their distinctions over the prior art of record were discussed earlier, such amendments do not raise a new issue requiring a further search and/or consideration by the Examiner. As such, entry of this Amendment is believed proper and Applicant earnestly solicits entry. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yasuda (U.S. Patent No. 5,740,640).

This rejection is respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

An exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention is directed to a securing clip for securing a first panel member with a second panel member. The securing clip includes a first fitting portion having a U-character shape, and a second fitting portion having a U-character shape. The securing clip being like the S-character in cross section. Each of the first fitting

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portion and the second fitting portion include an engaging pawl on an inner wall face. The second fitting portion includes an engagement wall having an engagement face at an end of the engagement wall that faces an opening in the closed end of the U-character shape of the second fitting portion.

Conventional securing clips are subject to the risk of a distortion about the hole in the fender protector which may result in the clip releasing from the hole in the fender protector (page 1, line 23 - page 2, line 7).

In stark contrast, the present invention provides an engagement wall having an engagement face at an end of the engagement wall that faces an opening in the closed end of the U-character shape of the second fitting portion. In this manner, the securing clip will not distort around the hole in the second panel member and, therefore, will reduce the likelihood that the second panel member will fall off the first panel member. (Page 4, lines 13 - 21).

II. THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that the Yasuda reference teaches the claimed invention. Applicants submit, however, that there are elements of the claimed invention which are neither taught nor suggested by the Yasuda reference.

The Yasuda reference does not teach or suggest the features of the claimed invention including an engagement wall having an engagement face at an end of the engagement wall that faces an opening in the closed end of the U-character shape of the second fitting portion as recited by the independent claims. As explained above, this feature is important for preventing the securing clip distorting around the hole in the second panel member and, thereby, reducing the likelihood that the second panel member will fall off the first panel

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member.

The Examiner alleges that the ledges 18a and 18b correspond to the claimed engagement walls. However, these ledges 18a and 18b are adjacent to an open end of the U-character shape of the second fitting portion defined by 10 and 20 (or the outer engagement pieces 12).

Further, none of the other faces on the outer engagement pieces 12 face an opening in the closed end of the U-character shape.

For example, as illustrated by Figure 5, the engagement face 12a on the engagement wall 12 is advantageous because it abuts a regulation wall 18 of the fender protector 16. Absent the opening in the closed end of the U-character shape facing the engagement face 12a the regulation wall 18 of the fender protector 16 would not be able to extend through the closed end of the U-character shape to abut the engagement face 12a.

An example of an opening in the closed end of the U-character shape facing the engagement face 12a is also clearly illustrated by Figure 1.

In this manner, the opening in the closed end of the U-character shape facing the engagement face 12a enables the regulation wall 18 to abut the engagement face 12a of the engagement wall to thereby prevent the securing clip and the fender protector to rotate and/or distort relative to each other which might otherwise cause the fender protector to release from the securing clip.

The door molding clip that is disclosed by the Yasuda reference clearly does not address this problem.

Clearly, the door molding clip that is disclosed by the Yasuda reference does not teach or suggest the features recited by independent claims 1 and 14.

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Therefore, the Yasuda reference does not teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention and the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection of claims 1-20.

III. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-20, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

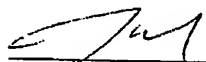
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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that I am filing this Amendment After Final Rejection Under 37 CFR §1.116 by facsimile with the United States Patent and Trademark Office to Examiner Joshua T. Kennedy, Group Art Unit 3679 at fax number (571) 273-8300 this 6th day of January, 2006.


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